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SUBJECT: SPAIN OPPOSES VENEZUELAN ANTI-NGO LAW

REF: SECSTATE 97547

Classified By: PolCouns Kathy Fitzpatrick for reasons 1.4 (b)&(d).

(C/NF) Poloff discussed the problems presented by Venezuela's proposed anti-NGO law with MFA Deputy DG for Andean Affairs Juan Carlos Sanchez on June 20. Sanchez said that Spain is well aware of the proposal. He said that the EU had agreed to work cooperatively on the issue, and that an EU delegation had registered its concerns with both Vice President Rangel and the primary legislative proponent of the law about a week and a half ago. Sanchez said that Spain will continue to work to change the proposal because it disagrees with the concept that funding for democracy and human rights NGOs would have to be funneled through a Venezuelan government entity. In fact, he said that such a scheme would contravene Spanish aid rules.
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